

EDUCATION THAT FITS FOR SERVICE.

An Interesting Description of the County Schools of Agriculture and Domestic Economy in Wisconsin.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

In the course of a recent address before the students of the Agricultural College of the University of Wisconsin, a successful agriculturist said: "The successful man is not the lover of the dollar, but the lover of his business." To a great extent, the measure of business success in the relations of both cause and effect must be the dollar. To insure its wise application during the crucial period which determines the ultimate failure or triumph of a business venture, the worker must thoroughly comprehend not only the requirements of his own business but, in addition, his own limitations and the degree of his ability to meet these requirements. Overconfidence, timidity, or ignorance, alike invite waste and failure.

No class of workers are more hampered by ill preparation for their life work than are farmers, but as yet comparatively few are aware of the existence of limitations other than lack of money or strength. People who love their work are usually enthusiastic in it and may, unconscious of a particular leaning toward any phase of work, find when difficulties are mastered and the power born of knowledge is acquired that their entire personal attitude is changed and that indifference or dislike is changed to attraction for and enjoyment in their work.

A scientific knowledge of agriculture, had it been possible, could have never come amiss, but now when farmer contends with many of the difficulties that harassed his ancestors and confronts problems of whose existence they never could have dreamed, a specific preparation is as essential to success as air and food are to life.

To aid him in weather-wisdom the modern farmer has the thermometer, the barometer and the reports of the United States Signal Service; the constantly expanding mail, telegraphic, and telephonic service he may command to keep him in touch with the markets, and the bulletins issued by the government, the State Agricultural Colleges, the United States Experiment Stations, supplemented by institutes and lecture courses inform him of the latest discoveries of science and their application to his interests. Countless magazines and newspapers are published in the interests of the industry, but neither these nor the foregoing aids will be of avail to the farmer who is intellectually unfit to comprehend them or who has not the wit or energy to apply their principles to his own use.

THE FARMER'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

To be successful, then, the farmer must be sufficiently educated to wisely use the information available to him; he should understand enough

of elementary engineering to oversee building roads and to install agricultural and sanitary drainage and furnish water supply properly to his house and buildings. He should also be familiar enough with the principles of architecture to insure the adaptation of his buildings to his own special needs. Political economy and political science should be within his comprehension, their past as well as the present status, that he may judge as to the beneficent or injurious effect of political and commercial measures and he must be trained to exert wisely his political power in the local and general governments. To counteract some of the effects of the isolation inherent in the industry he and his family should cultivate a genuine love for reading, and should be supplied with a broad range, including history, travel and those realistic novels which will familiarize them with conditions of life in other environments.

People who are so unfortunate as to be thrown upon their own unaided resources for amusements, who frequently have not time or strength for aught but the grind of work, are painfully self-conscious whenever brought into contact with other conditions. If actual society is not possible, much of its benefit may be conferred by the books and magazines so plentiful through which needed, and all can travel or enter any social "set" at will by proxy, and can thus secure some of the ease and polish gained by actual social privileges.

If the above requirements are essential to a successful agricultural life the question naturally arises as to the mode of securing them, especially where time and money are to be considered.

The common school system supplies much of the technical training essential to the ordinary person: that is, he learns to read, write, to conduct ordinary business transactions, and something of history and kindred subjects, but, unfortunately, much of this knowledge is acquired at a time when the mind is too immature to make it of the value it should be.

WISCONSIN'S EXPERIMENT.

Wisconsin has made an experiment which consists in organizing and equipping two schools which shall be free to pupils living in the respective counties and which shall supplement the work of the district schools and train their students with direct reference to farm environments. It is intended that the courses of study and the equipment of these schools shall be sufficiently elastic to provide the training requisite to the people in their immediate localities. This feature of the work is characteristic of Mr. L. D. Harvey, ex-State Superintendent of Education, the Special Commissioner appointed by the Legislature of 1899 to investigate and report upon the subject of agricultural training. Mr. Harvey's report, which embodies the results of his investigations and his

conclusions and recommendations (based upon results in this and foreign countries), is as interesting as it is suggestive, and these two schools are practical illustrations of a scheme of education especially adapted to farming communities.

Marathon and Dunn Counties were selected because both are progressive educationally and agriculturally, thus affording suitable environments for the experiment. The school at Menomonie, Dunn County, was completed first and was opened in October, 1902. The building was planned by Mr. J. T. W. Jennings, Supervising Architect of the Buildings and Grounds of the University of Wisconsin, who has recently superintended the construction of the magnificent new building of the Agricultural College at Madison. The Menomonie building is 42 x 96 feet in dimensions, and was planned to accommodate the Dunn County Teachers' Training School, which occupies the third story. The first floor has a general laboratory, 20 x 40 feet, to be used for elementary science and dairy work; recitation room, 20 x 32 feet, equipped with blackboards, apparatus for use of stereopticon; boiler, fuel, laundry, janitor's and men's wash-rooms are also on this floor. The second floor (main entrance floor) contains assembly and study room, 40 x 40 feet, with sinks and apparatus for cooking and serving food properly; a sewing room, 19 x 20 feet, equipped for teaching cutting, fitting and sewing; a principal's office fitted with shelves for the agricultural and general library of the school, and a store-room, 8 x 9 feet, and ladies' cloak room. The third floor has a similar assembly room and two recitation rooms, the remainder of the floor being adapted to the use of the Teachers' Training School. The attic is unfinished and will afford ample room for exercise in inclement weather.

WHAT THE BOYS LEARN.

Near the main building is a two-story shop building where is installed ample machinery for the teaching and practice of carpentry, blacksmithing, the care and repairing of machinery, engines and boilers; in short, all that is necessary for farmers to know of farm machinery. Near these buildings is a tract of land sufficient for vegetable and flower gardens and for the houses and run-ways necessary in care of poultry.

The main farm is one and one-half miles from the school, and the students are conveyed back and forth when necessary. This property belongs to the county, and thus can be permanently maintained and equipped as dictated by the interests of the school. Its buildings, stock, machinery, orchards—all apparatus—have been selected with a view to familiarizing the students with the best and most modern appliances and methods. The students will learn to select crops with reference to the chemical elements of the soil; to modify the soils with the aid of

fertilizers or through the growth of certain crops; to broaden their work and to aid and interest farmers' samples of soil from other sections of the country will be analyzed and their owners advised as to the use to make of such tracts of land. Much attention will be given to practical horticulture, other than orchard trees, and to every possible adjunct to farm life.

THE COURSES FOR YOUNG WOMEN.

The girls are taught the best methods of performing all labor relating to the economy, health and comfort of the home. Every effort is made to distinguish between house-keeping and home-keeping. The application of arithmetic to home management, cooking and sewing, millinery, home management, real and false economy, will provide for the material side, while lessons in social usages, in English, history, civil government, economics and general literature will lead the young women to a knowledge of life that will fit them to be the companions of their husbands and neighbors and to wisely direct their children. The woman who takes this course should be able to enter any society to which her future life may lead without awkwardness or self-consciousness due to the isolation and entire devotion to mechanical work.

The work of these and similar schools will solve the vexed question as to the mode of stemming the tide of migration from country to city, for when farming can be put on the basis of other industries as to advantages, financial and social, there will be no lack of people eager to invest in farm property. It is not farm life but farm slavery that drives the ambitious youth of both sexes from the farm.

ENROLLMENT IN THE SCHOOLS.

At the end of six weeks the Dunn County School had fifty-seven pupils enrolled; thirty boys (average age, 17½) and twenty-five girls (average age, 19) from the country, and two boys from the county-seat, Menomonie.

The Marathon County School at Wausau had at the same time an enrollment of sixty-three; sixteen boys and forty-seven girls. The same general course of work is given as in the Menomonie school. Especial attention will be given to animal husbandry since stock-raising is the most important branch of agriculture in that immediate locality. The Wausau farm has a herd representing six leading breeds and stock judging, the scientific care and feeding of stock and the production of the grains and roots best adapted to stock-raising will be taught.

The greatest care was exercised in the selection of the faculties for the schools. It was essential that their members should be specialists in these schools. It was essential that those branches of science particularly relating to Agriculture, but it was considered equally essential that they should have demonstrated their ability for independent research and